

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

401 North Washington Street, Suite 100
Rockville, Maryland 20850

MEETING MINUTES

March 23, 2005

7:00 p.m.

ATTENDING

Patricia E. Cornish
Jodi Finkelstein
Jodi Grant
Carol Lynn Green
Deborah Horan
Shirley L. Johnson
Resa Levy
Regina Oldak
Tedi S. Osias
Shelia Parker
Gary P. Smith
Yun Jung Yang

STAFF

Paula Rodgers
Tracy Stuger
Judith Vaughan-Prather

GUEST

Darby Jones, Frederick CFW

ABSENT

Holly Fechner

I. CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES.....Cornish

President Cornish called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. The following additions to the meeting agenda were noted: two additional items under the Staff Report, an update on the Divorce Roundtable under the Liaison Report and an update on SB 257 under the Policy and Legislation Committee Report.

Upon the motion of Commissioner Smith, duly seconded by Commissioner Parker and unanimously passed, the Minutes of February 23, 2005 were approved as written.

II. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

A. President's Advisory Council Meeting

The second of this year's three meetings of the leaders of Montgomery County's women's organization will take place on Wednesday, May 4 at New Fortune Restaurant in Gaithersburg. Senator Sharon Grosfeld and Delegate Jean Cryor will serve as guest speakers to present a wrap up of legislation in the 2005 Maryland

General Assembly. Registration and networking will begin at 6 p.m. and the program and dinner will start at 6:30 p.m.

B. Committee Workplans

Each CFW committee was asked to review its FY05 workplans to assess progress toward established goals. The IWin committee has already undertaken this very worthwhile exercise. The Policy and Legislative (PAL) and Technology and Girls (TAG) Committees are asked to do the same.

C. Newsletter

The March issue of the CFW newsletter was published and distributed. Another issue will be published in June 2005. Commissioners are urged to write an article for the next issue. May 6 is the deadline for submitting articles to Editor Tracy Stuger for the June issue.

D. Women's History Month Activities

The Commission for Women/Counseling and Career Center was involved in a number of activities to commemorate March as Women's History Month:

(1) Created an exhibit on display the entire month of March at the Rockville Library, featuring the 30 Montgomery County women honored in the CFW Women's History Archives and also a pictorial history of the CFW/CCC. Information about the Women's History Quilt was also posted on opening page of the County's website.

(2) Helped to sponsor a Women's History Month workshop (*"Transitioning from the Ordinary to the Extraordinary Career"*) sponsored by the Montgomery County African American Employees Association. Budget and Legislative Specialist Tracy Stuger presented remarks at the workshop that was attended by 60 people. Administrative Specialist Paula Rodgers handled registration for Continuing Education Units offered by CFW's Counseling and Career Center.

(3) Cosponsored the BPW event: Women: Back to the Future held March 15. CFW is also cosponsoring BPW's 6th Annual Health Empowerment Forum for Women to be held April 22.

(4) President Cornish made a presentation on women's history to the Montgomery County Board of Education on February 23.

(5) CFW/CCC counselors and staff spoke at seminars as part of the Women in Business Conference and Tradeshow, hosted by the Rockville Chamber of Commerce on March 11.

(6) The March issue of CFW's Newsletter contains articles on Women's History Month.

(7) On March 31, President Cornish and CCC Counselor Fran Berger will present a workshop to Sodexo Marriott employees, to close out Women's History Month.

E. Committee Evaluation Review Board (CERB)

On March 8, President Cornish testified before the County Council objecting to the CERB report proposal for a 5-year sunset provision for every board, committee and commission in county government. On March 14, the Council held a worksession at which the Council staff recommended against the sunset proposal. The Commission will continue to monitor the Council's work on the CERB proposals.

F. Commissioner Recruitment

Recruitment for the six vacancies has begun and the closing date to apply is April 8. The terms of four commissioners will expire this June and there are also two vacancies. Of the commissioners with expiring terms, Commissioners Finkelstein and Grant have indicated that they will not seek re-appointment, and Commissioner Green, having served two terms, is ineligible to apply for reappointment. President Cornish has indicated her intent to reapply. Of the five other vacancies, three are endorsed and two are independent. Upon the motion made by Commissioner Osias; seconded by Commissioner Grant and passed unanimously, the following persons were appointed to serve on the Recruitment Committee, which includes the Executive Director, Commissioners Parker, Oldak, and Horan. Commissioner Grant agreed to serve as an alternate if needed.

G. United Nations Beijing Pact

Commissioner Oldak reported that ten years ago, a very extensive platform of women's issues and rights was developed. This year, the United Nations wanted the signatories of all countries in order to reaffirm their commitment, and the Beijing Platform was reaffirmed.

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Pay Equity Commission

Based on the CFW's recommendations made at the February 23 meeting, the CFW submitted recommendations to Jean Cryor for former commissioner Wendy Kahn, and Tracy Brown of the Maryland Women's Law Center. Commissioner Oldak moved that CFW Commissioner Holly Fechner's name also be submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grant and passed unanimously. A motion that a letter of support regarding the nominations be sent from CFW, was withdrawn in favor of Executive Director Vaughan-Prather's suggestion that commissioners have their endorsing organizations write letters of support. Ms. Vaughan-Prather will send a sample letter with all of the contact information commissioners will need to write the letter of support. Ms. Vaughan-Prather will also contact Senator Grosfeld to advise her of the three candidates.

B. Heritage Center Focus Groups

The CFW responded to a request from Linda Shevitz, Education Equity Coordinator for the Maryland State Department of Education to host a focus group of local CFWs for women to discuss the Heritage Center project. However, this may not take place until the end of May or June.

C. Website Updates

Commissioners are reminded to send staff their updated biographical information for the CFW website. Ms. Vaughan-Prather has directed that Ms. Rodgers update the CFW committee's information using each committee's workplan.

D. Committees/Meetings/Attendance/Reports

This topic was deferred from the February 23 CFW meeting; however the Executive Committee decided to discuss it at the CFW Planning Meeting in July.

E. MCPS Health Education Curriculum

Ms. Horan has drafted the letter in support of the Montgomery County School Board's current health education curriculum, to include the discussion of issues of sexual orientation beginning in the 8th grade and a condom demonstration video in the 10th grade. Ms. Vaughan-Prather will review the letter and staff will finalize it for mailing.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Equal Pay Day

Information packets on Equal Pay Day (April 19, 2005) were distributed to commissioners and ideas were discussed on how to bring attention to the issue. Ms. Grant noted that if the equal pay and paycheck fairness acts were enacted, or if the minimum wage were increased, it would solve the problems with solvency of the Social Security program. Ms. Grant offered to write an op ed article to submit to the Gazette on behalf of the Commission for Women. The motion was made by Ms. Oldak, seconded by Ms. Green and unanimously passed. Ms. Vaughan-Prather will send the op ed to local CFWs along with the Equal Pay Day information packets. Ms. Vaughan-Prather will also send the talking points paper to the CFW's electronic distribution list and urge everyone to wear red on April 19. This motion was made by Ms. Oldak, seconded by Ms. Finkelstein and unanimously passed.

B. Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Ms. Levy reported that there are proposals to cut funding for VAWA. This program has been of enormous assistance to women over the past 10 years. The reauthorization bill will be introduced by both the House and Senate this spring. Commissioners Finkelstein, Grant and Levy will monitor this issue.

C. Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Segments of the business community are pressuring the Department of Labor (DOL) to make changes to the application of the Family Medical Leave Act that would make it more difficult for many people to use its benefits. Commissioner Grant will monitor the issue and advise CFW if any input is needed.

D. NACW Action Alerts

Related to the FMLA issue is a concern that Executive Director Vaughan-Prather expressed regarding the importance of sharing timely messages with other CFWs. Ms. Vaughan-Prather forwarded an urgent email message to the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) to encourage notification of its members of the opportunity to sign on to the National Partnership for Women and Families' letter to the Department of Labor. At that time, only three CFWs had signed on to the letter and the NACW had not responded. Ms. Vaughan-Prather contacted a board member directly and convinced her to take action on behalf of the organization and then created an email distribution list of NACW members and sent out emails urging as many as possible to sign on to the letter. At the end of today, a total of 13 CFWs and the NACW had added their names to this important document. Ms. Vaughan-Prather said that she learned that NACW does not usually send out such action alerts to its membership, which currently has only 30 members

V. **STAFF REPORT**..... Vaughan-Prather

A. Implications of Open Meetings Act

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather recently attended training for staff liaisons of the County's boards, committees and commissions (BCC's) that focused on Rules of Order and the Open Meetings Act. The Opens Meetings Act and Roberts Rules of Order determine how County BCC's must conduct business. All County BCC's are required to operate under Roberts Rules of Order when taking official action, and all function under the requirements of the Open Meetings Act. A summary of the most relevant rules was distributed to commission members and is attached to these Minutes to be made part of the record.

B. Budget

The CFW FY 06 budget worksession before the County's Health and Human Services Committee is scheduled on April 28 at 9:30 a.m. The worksession will be held in the Council Office Building 7th Floor Conference Room. Commissioners Levy, Horan, Parker, Osias and Oldak will accompany staff to the meeting. *[Staff Note: The date of this worksession has been changed to April 18 at 2 p.m.]*

C. Domestic Violence Commission

In February 2004, former CFW president Dorothy Fait came before the commission to discuss the status of the County Executive's Task Force on Domestic Violence. The Task Force was established by Executive Order and had to be officially extended every year in order for the Task Force to be authorized. In 1998, extending the Task Force was overlooked, although the group continued to meet and work through the summer of 2003. At the CFW meeting in February 2004, Ms. Fait asked CFW to write to the County Executive in support of continuing the Task Force and making it a permanent body through legislation.

Currently, County Councilmember Steven Silverman is considering legislation to create a Task Force on Domestic Violence. The CFW has a strong commitment to this Task Force on Domestic Violence and will be keeping abreast of this initiative.

D. Women in Business Conference and Tradeshow

The Women in Business Conference and Tradeshow, cosponsored by the Commission for Women took place on March 11 at the new County Conference Center and was a huge success. There were over 30 tradeshow representatives and 256 registrants. CFW's Counseling Center staffed an information booth at the conference and facilitated and moderated a number of workshops, including one presented by former Commissioner Beth Irons.

E. Divorce Roundtable Workshops

Two members of the Divorce Roundtable group have asked the CFW's Counseling and Career Center to offer non-secular pre-marital training workshops as one of its workshop programs. The Roundtable is considering asking for an increase in the fee for a marriage license and persons who successfully complete the workshop would be able to waive the increased amount. The group proposes to implement a pilot workshop in September 2005 and then begin offering the workshops in April 2006. Some concern about this initiative was expressed by some commissioners.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Immigrant Women in Montgomery County (IWin)Yang

The IWin Committee met on March 9 and reviewed and approved for final printing 3,000 copies of the Sexual Harassment and Employment Rights of Pregnant Women brochures in English. Copies of both brochures were distributed to commissioners. The goal is to print 3,000 of each language. Approximately \$4,000 is needed to print both brochures in each language, for a total of \$16,000. The committee has a \$4,000 commitment for the Korean publications and hopes to obtain funding for the Spanish ones next.

Commissioner Levy, Ms. Vaughan-Prather and Ms. Stuger attended a Council staff worksession on the proposed Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. One suggestion was a proposal to develop another booklet for domestic workers, as part of the Know Your Rights Campaign.

Commissioner Yang shared with commissioners the National Association of Counties (NACo) 2004 Achievement Award that was presented to the IWin Committee for its *Brave New World* project. The IWin Committee, President Cornish, Executive Director Vaughan-Prather and staff were recognized at the Montgomery's Best Honors Award ceremony held March 11 at the Montgomery County Conference Center.

B. Policy and Legislation (PAL)Osias/Finkelstein/Grant

The PAL Committee met on March 16. Commissioner Osias reported on the following:

(1) Emergency Contraception (HB 699) – The bill was up for third reader today. At least one unfriendly amendment was made, but the hope is that it will pass the House with no amendments.

(2) No Means No hearing took place on March 16. The Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee will hear it on March 22.

(3) Predatory Lending The County Council continues to hold worksessions on the proposed legislation. There is still disagreement as to whether it is a civil rights issue or a banking and lending issue and the remedies differ for each one. The next Council worksession will be on April 4, and a consumer and public education forum is scheduled to take place on May 18 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Office Building 3rd Floor Conference Room. Commissioner Johnson noted that consumer education is a major component of the bill.

(4) Anti-choice legislation – There are two bills regarding the fetus as a person issue. One bill pertains to a pregnant woman who is murdered and the other speaks to when the fetus is killed. The CFW wrote in opposition to both bills.

(5) SB 10 – Address Confidentiality – passed the Senate

C. Federal LegislationGrant

(1) Go Girls Act – As of this time, this bill has not been reintroduced.

(2) Homeland Security Enhancement Act – Has not been reintroduced.

(3) Reproductive Rights/fetal pain – A bill has been introduced requiring that pregnant women beyond a certain point of gestation must be warned that the fetus may feel pain and be offered the opportunity to provide drugs to the fetus to reduce the possible pain if an abortion is anticipated. No position taken.

C. State Legislation

(1) SB 257-Re-establishment of the Maryland CFW – This bill passed the Senate and goes to the Government Operations Committee in the House. An email draft of the action alert regarding this bill was sent to the commissioners this afternoon for consideration. The CFW has taken a position in strong support of SB 257. Senator Grosfeld wants the bill to pass without an amendment under consideration that would permit current members to remain on the commission until their terms expire.

Commissioners Finkelstein and Yang expressed their views that the current MCW members should be allowed to complete their terms.

Commissioners discussed the draft email action alert. Upon motion by Commissioner Osias, seconded by Commissioner Oldak and passed by a vote of 8 to 1 (with 3 abstentions), the language in the alert was changed as follows: (~~strikeout~~ indicates language to be deleted and replaced by underlined language)

“...We strongly recommend that this bill be enacted ~~with no amendments as~~ approved by the Senate.”

C. Technology and Girls (TAG)Smith

The Technology and Girls Committee met on March 2 and will meet again on April 6. Commissioner Smith reported that the survey to former summer computer camp attendees was finalized and mailed out. To date, 29 have responded. Graduate Student Intern Claudia Lujan will begin following up by telephone with those girls who have not responded. Mr. Smith will be working with the college to develop a proposal for reduced camp tuition.

VII. LIAISON REPORTS

A. Montgomery Women Power Tea

Commissioner Oldak reported that the 1st Annual Power Tea held on March 13 went very well, with 150 in attendance. Commissioner Fechner also attended.

B. Women’s Fair

Plans are underway for the 25th Annual Montgomery County Women’s Fair on April 16 at the Conference Center. Staff and commissioners will be staffing the CFW/CCC information booth.

C. Divorce Roundtable

Commissioner Osias reported that the Committee is moving forward with the Recidivism Project which pertains to families that end up in court repeatedly. A pilot project is being developed to help those families where court proceedings are unsuccessful. The group is also lobbying against a bill to create presumption of joint custody.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Worklife Alliance Breakfast – takes place at the Pooks Hill/Bethesda Marriott on April 8. President Cornish will send the email invitation to commissioners.
- B. Domestic Violence Conference – The Interfaith Community Against Domestic Violence is holding a spring conference “Creating Caring Communities” on April 13 in Gaithersburg. The flier announcing this was distributed to commissioners.
- C. The Howard County Domestic Violence Center is holding its annual fundraiser on May 13 at the Turf Valley Resort and Conference Center in Ellicott City, Maryland. Tickets are \$100 and can be purchased at <http://www.dvcenter.org>.
- D. The May 7, 2005 issue of *Time Magazine* has an article on steering girls into science.
- E. Maryland Child Care Resource Network – Commissioner Horan reported that the Mental Health Association is asking CFW to contact legislators to urge them to restore funding to the Resource Center. A motion was made by Ms. Horan, duly seconded by Ms. Finkelstein and unanimously passed by an 11 to 1 vote, that a letter be sent from CFW in support off the continued funding for the Child Care Resource Network. Ms. Horan will draft the letter.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission for Women, the meeting was adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

CFW Action and Follow-up Items

- [] 1. The next President's Advisory Council meeting is Wednesday, May 4, 2005 at the New Fortune Restaurant in Gaithersburg. Senator Sharon Grosfeld and Delegate Jean Cryor will serve as guest speakers to present a wrap up of legislation in the 2005 Maryland General Assembly. Registration and networking will begin at 6 p.m. and the program and dinner will start at 6:30 p.m.
- [X] 2. All Committees are to review their workplans to assess progress toward established goals. The IWin Committee has already completed this exercise.
- [] 3. Commissioners are encouraged to write an article for the next issue of the CFW Newsletter to be published in June. The deadline for submitting articles to Ms. Stuger for the June issue is May 6.
- [] 4. Commissioner Recruitment - Serving on the interview panel are Commissioners Parker, Oldak, and Horan. Commissioner Grant will serve as an alternate, if needed. The application deadline is April 8 and the panel members will begin interviews after that time. **[Staff Note: The deadline has been extended to April 15. Interview Panel members should try to keep their calendars open during the week of April 18.]**
- [] 5. Commissioners should have their endorsing organizations write letters of support for the nominations of Wendy Kahn, Tracy Brown and Holly Fechner to the state Pay Equity Commission. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather will send a sample letter with all of the contact information that commissioners need in order to write the letter of support.
- [] 6. Commissioners are reminded to send staff their updated biographical information for the CFW website. Ms. Vaughan-Prather has directed that Ms. Rodgers update the CFW committee's information using each committee's workplan.
- [] 7. The topic re Committees/Meetings/Attendance/Reports will be discussed at the Commission's Planning Meeting in July.
- [X] 8. Commissioner Horan draft letter in support of the School Board's current health education curriculum, will be reviewed by Ms. Vaughan-Prather and finalized for mailing by staff this week.
- [X] 9. Commissioner Grant will write an op ed article to submit to the Gazette on behalf of the Commission for Women. Ms. Vaughan-Prather will send the op ed to local CFWs along with the Equal Pay Day information packets. Ms. Vaughan-Prather will also send the talking points paper to the CFW's electronic distribution list and urge everyone to wear red on April 19.
- [] 10. Commissioners Finkelstein, Grant and Levy will keep abreast of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

- [] 11. Staff to send a copy of the approved Minutes of the March 23 CFW meeting to Darby Jones, Frederick County Commissioner.
- [] 12. The CFW FY 06 budget worksession before the County's Health and Human Services Committee is scheduled on April 28 at 9:30 a.m. The worksession will be held in the Council Office Building 7th Floor Conference Room. Commissioners Levy, Horan, Parker, Osias and Oldak will accompany staff to the meeting. *[Staff Note: The date of this worksession has been changed to April 18 at 2 p.m.]*
- [X] 13. In regard to SB 257, the email action alert will be sent out with the change that CFW strongly recommends that this bill be enacted "as approved by the Senate."
- [X] 14. Summer Computer Camps - Claudia Lujan will call the girls who have not responded to the summer computer camp surveys. Commissioner Smith will work with Montgomery College re a discounted cost for camp attendees.
- [X] 15. CFW to send a letter to legislators asking them to restore funding for the Maryland Child Care Resource Network. Commissioner Horan will draft the letter.

Minutes Submitted By
Paula S. Rodgers
Montgomery County Commission for Women